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RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

OF THE MANITOBA

CHILD CARE TASK FORCE

SOCIAL PLANNING COUNCIL OF WINNIPEG

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Because of the continuous rising demand for child care services by the parents of Manitoba (see Chart 1), the need for a critical review of the current system of care and careful strategic planning is great. Accordingly, the release of The Report of the Manitoba Child Care Task Force, in March of this year, was welcomed by the Social Planning Council as an important step in planning for the future needs of Manitoba's families.

The Social Planning Council also has been reviewing the state of child care in the Province and Country. It carried out a survey of some 2,200 Winnipeg families in 1984 to determine their child care needs. That report was quoted extensively in the federal Report of the Task Force on Child Care chaired by Dr. Katie Cook. After much internal deliberation, the Board approved a policy statement on child care in December of 1988. The statement enunciates some ten (10) principles governing the development of a child care system, and some twenty-one (21) recommendations for moving to a more fully developed response to the burgeoning demand for child care.

In our response to the report of the Child Care Task Force, we wish to begin by highlighting the key points of our policy statement on child care. In the light of our policies, we will comment on the report of the task force and offer suggestions about future initiatives that the Province should be taking to move toward a more adequate system of child care in the Province.

2.0 THE SOCIAL PLANNING COUNCIL'S POLICY STATEMENT ON CHILD CARE

As the Council has provided the Province with copies of our full statement on child care policy, we will highlight here the major points. With respect to the principles that must guide the development of a child care system, the

Council believes that the primary focus of a child care system must be on meeting the basic and developmental needs of all children. Enabling parents to carry out their responsibilities of providing care of adequate quality to their children is the secondary focus. In practise, these principles mean that a whole range of programs for meeting the needs of all children, regardless of the labour-force participation of their parents, should be developed. The development of parent-child centres, toy-lending libraries, an expanded nursery school and respite-care system, in addition to centre- and family-day-care, all would be initiatives consistent with this order of priorities.

In developing such a system, we see the parent as having the right to choose the type of care arrangement best suited for their children, but the state as having the responsibility to see that sufficient spaces of adequate quality are available. Furthermore, we see the development of such a comprehensive system of child care requiring the effective partnership of the Federal and Provincial governments, the parents and caregivers and employers. **Parents** have the responsibility to contribute to the cost of child care; to ensure that the care their child receives is of adequate quality; to participate in the governance of child care centres; and to develop their parenting skills. **Governments** must set minimum standards of care provided by licenced arrangements; provide funding for the creation of child care facilities; and provide subsidies for low-income parents, to ensure equal accessibility, and provide for the training of child care staff. **Caregivers** are responsible for care of adequate quality and **Employers** are responsible for developing work schedules, which accomodate the needs of families with young children; and work-based day care where possible.

The recommendations we set out for moving to a fully developed system reflect a concern for enhancing:

- the quality of care;
- parent's financial accessibility to child care arrangements;
- the supply of child care spaces;
- the management of the demand for child care; and
- the achievement of a balance in the development of the child care system.

Appendix 1 lists the specific recommendations included under each of these headings.

3.0 RESPONSE TO THE TASK FORCE REPORT

3.1 Overall Comments

In the light of these principles and recommendations, there are a number of comments we can make about the report of the Child Care Task Force. First, the philosophical viewpoint adopted by the Report is very much that expressed in the Council's policy statement on child care: namely, that the development of the child-care system in Manitoba must occur as a partnership between the parents, the caregivers, the Provincial and Federal levels of government, and the community sectors of business, schools and professional associations. The Report's description of the respective roles of the partners follows closely those articulated by the Council. In fact, it recommends broader responsibilities for the Province, the Federal Government and the Community than envisaged by the Council. The Province has the added task of ensuring that parents have access to the information necessary to make choices about the type of care arrangments best suited to their children. The Federal Government's role includes leadership in the

development of training opportunities and resources; and, the school system has the responsibility of providing school-age day care spaces.

Nonetheless, there are subtle differences that should be noted. While the Council sees the primary focus of a child care system being the child, the Task Force Report states: **"...that parents should be viewed as the senior partner"; and, that "the goal of the child care arrangements that are evolving in our community is not to replace parents, but to augment their efforts to ensure the safe and healthy growth and development of their children"** (emphasis theirs). In the Council's view, an ideal child-care system is one which is comprehensive, providing a range of support services to all children, regardless of their parents' need for non-parental forms of care. While this view is shared by the Task Force, it devotes only two pages and one recommendation to the need for comprehensive services, acknowledging that the issue of broad support services to families fell outside its formal mandate. Thus, in principle, the Report is consistent with the Council's vision of a broad range of services available to all children. In practise, the Task Force confines its attention to the task of improving the system of non-parental care arrangements.

In doing so, the Task Force has produced a truly comprehensive statement of the changes needed to the current system. Its 204 recommendations cover the following topics:

- Training and education (#1 to #25; 9 involving expenditures);
- Public education (#26 to #28; 3 with expenditures)
- Standards and Regulations (#30 to #32; 3 with expenditures)
- Centre Boards (#33 to #39; 5 with expenditures);
- Licencing (#40 to #43; 2 with expenditures);
- Staffing Ratios (#44 and #45; 0 with expenditures);

- Child Day Care Office (#46 to #52; 4 with expenditures);
- Health & Safety (#53 to #55; 0 with expenditures);
- Distribution of Spaces (#56 to #58; 0 with expenditures);
- Infant Care (#59 to #63; 3 with expenditures);
- School Age Care (#64 to #69; 1 with expenditures);
- Nursery Schools (#70 to #74; 3 with expenditures);
- Capitalization of Spaces in Schools/Government Buildings (#75 to #80; 0 with expenditures);
- Adaptability of System (#81 to #87; 3 with expenditures);
- Diversity of System (#88 to #97; 6 with expenditures);
- Flexibility of System (#98 to #100; 3 with expenditures);
- Worksite Care (#101 to #103; 1 with expenditures);
- Sick Day Care (#104 & #105; 0 with expenditures);
- Financial Management & Controls (#106 to #121; 0 with expenses);
- Family Day Care (#122 to #147; 7 with expenditures);
- Rural Day Care (#148 to #155; 6 with expenditures);
- Aboriginal Day Care (#156 to #169; 4 with expenditures);
- Funding of Child Care (#170 to #190; 13 with expenditures;
- Funding of Salaries (#191 to #198; 4 with expenditures);
- Commercial Centres (#199 to #203; 2 with expenditures);
- Support for Families (#204; 0 with expenditures).

The recommendations focus almost exclusively on strengthening and broadening the current non-profit system of child care. While the Report recommends providing financial assistance to the commercial sector, it puts very tight constraints around that funding, and limits the growth of the sector to its current 10-percent-share of the total number of licenced spaces. The Social Planning Council fully supports this emphasis on the non-profit delivery of child care.

The Report supports the development of a much-strengthened Family Day Care system, to correct the current undersupply of licenced family day care spaces. It also

recommends the development of a parallel system of child care run by, and for, the Aboriginal peoples of Manitoba. These policy thrusts the Council also fully supports.

Finally, it emphasizes that the goals of increasing the supply of spaces, the quality of existing spaces, and the enhancement of staff salaries all must be pursued in a balanced fashion. In this respect, it differs from the Council's recommendation of emphasizing supply above quality, and quality above the enhancement of subsidies for parents.

3.2 Specific Comments

Appended to this memo are the 21 recommendations that the Council included in its Brief to the Task Force. The following chart itemizes the Task Force Report recommendations that relate to the Council's:

SPC'S RECOMMENDATIONS	RELATED TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS
#1	#40, #138, #139, #140, #143
#2, #3, #4	#1-#25, #83, #84, #88, #96, #125 #126, #146, #149, #153-#155
#5	#191-#198
#6	#33-#37
#7	NONE
#8	#181, #182, #199, #139, #140
#9	#64-#66
#10	#204
#11, #21	#59
#12	EMPHASIS STATEMENT ON PAGE 124
#13-#18	NONE
#19-#20	#101-#103

With most of the Council's recommendations, the Task Force Report amplifies on them considerably. There are only

four areas covered by the Council's brief, where the Task Force Report presents either a weaker set of recommendations, or none at all. First, there is no mention made of the need for parenting courses (SPC's #7). Either the Task Force perceived this to be outside the parameters of its authority, or it felt it would be covered in its general recommendation (#204) for an interdepartmental review of all programs and policies bearing on children and families. This latter recommendation, the Council found to be so general as to be almost meaningless. Accordingly, the Report also makes no strong reference to the need for a comprehensive set of family support services as called for in the Council's recommendation #10. Third, the Report makes no mention of the role that the Province should play in negotiating better national child care legislation with the federal government. Twelve of the Council's recommendations (#10 to #21) are devoted to the role that the federal government should play in improving the Provincial system of child care. While the Task Force may well have not seen this area as falling within its mandate, it is an important role that the Province can continue to play. As such, it should have received mention by the Report. Finally, the Council's recommendations on managing better the demand for day care (#11 and #21) received short shrift in the Task Force Report. Only its #59 refers to the need for Federal- and Provincial-Government support for such things as parental leaves of absence, "pension"-type funds for maternity and paternity leave for infant care. Our document broadens this out to include the negotiation of preferred hours of employment for parents with children under the age of 13 years.

In sum, the Task Force Report provides a much more comprehensive prescription for change than does the Council's policy statement. Nonetheless, there are several areas omitted by the Report in which the Council believes the Province should play a key role.

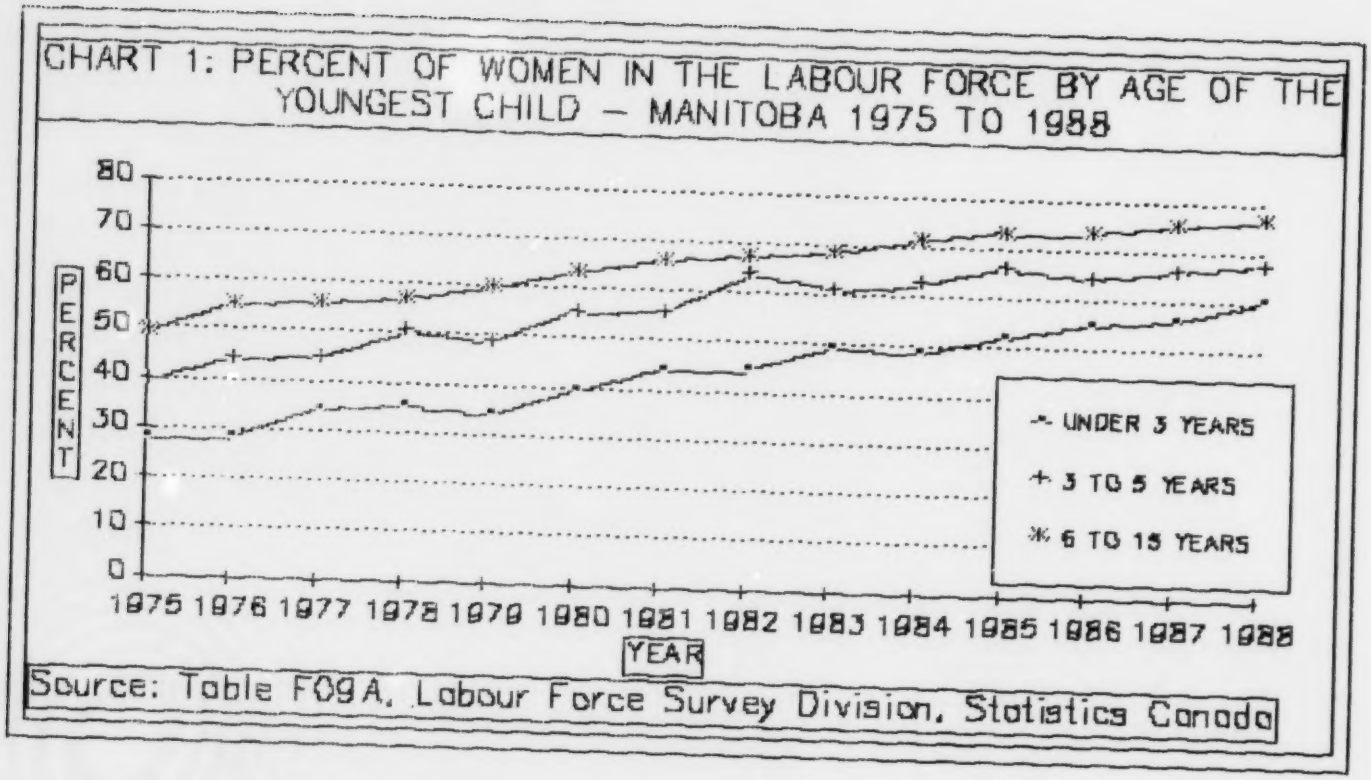
CHART 1: PERCENT OF WOMEN IN THE LABOUR FORCE BY AGE OF THE YOUNGEST CHILD – MANITOBA 1975 TO 1988
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
PERCENT
1975 1976 1977 1978 1979 1980 1981 1982 1983 1984 1985 1986 1987 1988
YEAR
UNDER 3 YEARS
3 TO 5 YEARS
6 TO 15 YEARS
Source: Table F09A, Labour Force Survey Division, Statistics Canada

QUALITY OF CHILD CARE

1. THAT THE PROVINCIAL CHILD DAY CARE OFFICE ENCOURAGE ALL UNLICENCED, PRIVATE-HOME CHILD DAY CARE PROVIDERS TO BECOME LICENCED.

2. THAT THE PROVINCE, THROUGH THE UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION, PROVIDE BASELINE FUNDING FOR THE CREATION OF A "CHILD STUDIES CONCENTRATION PROGRAM" WITHIN THE FACULTY OF HUMAN ECOLOGY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA, AS APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY'S SENATE, AND FOR THE CREATION OF THE JOINT DIPLOMA/DEGREE PROGRAM BETWEEN THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG AND RED RIVER COMMUNITY COLLEGE IN CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND CHILD CARE DEVELOPMENT.

3. THAT THE PROVINCE, THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT OF SECONDARY EDUCATION, INCREASE THE NUMBER OF SPACES AVAILABLE IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND THE NUMBER OF DISTANCE-EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR THE TRAINING OF CHILD CARE WORKERS.

4. THAT THE PROVINCE, THROUGH THE NEW CAREERS PROGRAM, SUPPORT THE FAMILY DAY CARE ASSOCIATION'S PILOT FIVE-WEEK TRAINING PROJECT FOR FAMILY DAY CARE PROVIDERS AND EXPAND ITS SUPPORT FOR THE PROGRAM, IF SUCCESSFUL, TO COVER PRIVATE-HOME CHILD DAY CARE PROVIDERS, IN BOTH WINNIPEG AND THROUGHOUT THE PROVINCE.

5. THAT THE PROVINCE, THROUGH THE CHILD DAY CARE PROGRAM, INCREASE THE VALUE OF THE SALARY ENHANCEMENT GRANTS TO ALL TRAINED CHILD CARE WORKERS WHO ARE EMPLOYED IN NON-PROFIT, LICENCED, CHILD DAY CARE SETTINGS.

6. THAT THE PROVINCE, THROUGHT THE CHILD DAY CARE PROGRAM, OFFER MORE TRAINING AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT SERVICES TO THE BOARDS OF THE NON-PROFIT CENTRES SO THAT THEY CAN GOVERN MORE EFFECTIVELY.

7. THAT THE PROVINCE, THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES, OFFER PARENTING PROGRAMS FOR PARENTS WHOSE CHILDREN ARE INVOLVED IN LICENCED CARE ARRANGEMENTS.

FINANCIAL ACCESSIBILITY

8. THAT ALL NOT-FOR-PROFIT LICENCED ARRANGEMENTS BE ELIGIBLE FOR FEE SUBSIDIES.

INCREASING THE SUPPLY

9. THAT THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT ENCOURAGE SCHOOL DIVISIONS TO CREATE SCHOOL-AGE CHILD DAY CARE CENTRE SPACES IN SCHOOLS.

STATISTICS CANADA ESTIMATED THAT 48 PERCENT OF TWO-INCOME FAMILIES WOULD FACE POVERTY IF EITHER PARENT QUIT WORK. ADEQUATE, AFFORDABLE AND ACCESSIBLE CHILD CARE IS A PROBLEM OF GREAT IMPORTANCE. SOMETHING MUST BE DONE!

AT THE MOMENT, MOST CHILD CARE IS PRIVATELY FINANCED BY FAMILIES. THE DEBATE HAS BEEN WHETHER CHILD CARE IS TO BE CONSIDERED A PRIVATELY FINANCED DISCRETIONARY EXPENDITURE FOR HIGHER INCOME GROUPS OR WHETHER IT SHOULD BE REGARDED AS A SYSTEM SUPPORTED, AS WITH HEALTH AND EDUCATION, PRIMARILY FROM TAX REVENUES. THIS DEBATE MUST END. WE CAN NO LONGER AFFORD TO CONTINUE IT AND RISK THE WELL-BEING OF OUR CHILDREN.

IMPROVING THE QUALITY

10. THAT THE FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS COST-SHARE THROUGH THE PROPOSED CANADA CHILD CARE ACT, THE CREATION OF A RANGE OF FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES LIKE HOMEMAKER, PARENT-CHILD CENTRES, RESPITE CARE, TOY-LENDING LIBRARIES WHICH ARE DESIGNED TO ENHANCE PARENTS' ABILITY TO PROVIDE CARE OF ADEQUATE QUALITY FOR THEIR CHILDREN.

MANAGING THE DEMAND

11. THAT THE FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS INITIATE OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THEIR CIVIL SERVICES FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN UNDER THIRTEEN YEARS TO NEGOTIATE PREFERRED HOURS OF EMPLOYMENT.

ACHIEVING A BALANCE

12. THAT ADDITIONAL NEW FEDERAL - AND PROVINCIAL-GOVERNMENT FUNDING FOR CHILD CARE BE DISTRIBUTED ACROSS PROGRAMS AIMED AT INCREASING THE SUPPLY OF CHILD CARE, THE VALUE OF SUBSIDIES TO LOW-INCOME PARENTS, AND THE WAGES OF CHILD CARE WORKERS. NONETHELESS, PRIORITY SHOULD BE GIVEN FIRST TO EXPANDING THE SUPPLY OF LICENCES SPACES;

    SECOND, TO AUGMENTING THE WAGES OF CHILD CARE WORKERS; AND

    THIRD, TO INCREASING THE MONEY AVAILABLE FOR FEE SUBSIDIES.

IMPROVING THE QUALITY

13. THAT MANITOBA URGE THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT MAKE SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO THE MEETING OF MINIMUM NATIONAL STANDARDS OF CHILD CARE IN THE CANADA CHILD CARE ACT, AS A CONDITION OF COST-SHARING WITH ANY PROVINCE.

FINANCIAL ACCESSIBILITY

14. THAT MANITOBA URGE THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CONVERT THE CHILD CARE EXPENSE DECUCTION TO A REFUNDABLE CHILD CARE EXPENSE TAX CREDIT.

    THIS RECOMMENDATION IS PUT FORWARD BY MANY INTERESTED GROUPS SUCH AS THE NATIONAL WELFARE COUNCIL AND THE CANADIAN COUNCIL ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH.

15. THAT MANITOBA URGE THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, THROUGH THE CANADA CHILD CARE ACT, COST-SHARE, ON AN OPEN-ENDED BASIS, INCOME-TESTED SUBSIDIES OF PARENT FEES.

INCREASING THE SUPPLY

16. THAT MANITOBA URGE THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, THROUGH THE CANADA CHILD CARE ACT, PROVIDE PER CAPITA GRANTS, ADJUSTED TO RECOGNIZE THE DIFFERING FISCAL CAPACITY OF THE PROVINCES, TO COVER CAPITAL COSTS, START-UP AND MAINTENANCE GRANTS FOR AN ADDITIONAL 400,000 SPACES OVER THE NEXT SEVEN YEARS.

17. THAT MANITOBA URGE THAT ONLY NON-PROFIT CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENTS BE ELIGIBLE FOR THESE FEDERAL GRANTS.

18. THAT MANITOBA URGE THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT REDIRECT ALL OF THE MONEY IT HAS ALLOCATED FOR AN ENRICHED CHILD TAX CREDIT TO THE COST-SHARED PER CAPITA GRANTS TO THE PROVINCES.

19. THAT MANITOBA URGE THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AMEND THE INCOME TAX ACT SO THAT THE PROVISION OF CHILD CARE BENEFITS TO EMPLOYEES BY EMPLOYERS NOT BE CONSIDERED A TAXABLE BENEFIT SO LONG AS:

THE SERVICES ARE PROVIDED IN A LICENCED CHILD CARE PROGRAM; AND

THE BENEFIT IS AVAILABLE TO ALL EMPLOYEES WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION.

20. THAT MANITOBA URGE THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PROVIDE EMPLOYERS WITH A TAX CREDIT FOR EXPENDITURES THEY INCUR IN PROVIDING EMPLOYEES WITH WORK-BASED CHILD DAY CARE.

MANAGING THE DEMAND

21. THAT MANITOBA URGE THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CREATE A SYSTEM OF EXTENDED PARENT LEAVE, AS RECOMMENDED IN THE REPORT OF THE TASK FORCE ON CHILD CARE.